

Testimony of Susan Eastwood, Chair, Ashford Clean Energy Task Force
Before the CGA Energy Committee, March 4, 2014

**Testimony in support of HB 5412,
An Act Concerning Shared Clean Energy Facilities.**

Good afternoon Senator Duff, Representative Reed and honorable members of the Energy Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony **in support of HB 5412, An Act Concerning Shared Clean Energy Facilities.**

My name is Susan Eastwood, and I am the Chair of the Ashford Clean Energy Task Force.

I greatly appreciate the past work of the Connecticut legislature to protect our environment and reduce energy consumption by promoting clean, renewable energy in CT and I hope they will continue their leadership by passing **HB 5412** this session.

As a homeowner, I have taken advantage of programs passed by the legislature to incentivize the adoption of energy efficiency measures by having an energy audit done on my home and installing additional insulation. I have also purchased discounted CFL bulbs and received rebates on Energy Star appliances.

When my furnace needed replacing, I installed a geothermal system, which further reduces my energy costs and use of dirty fuels.

Recently, our Clean Energy Task Force worked with a solar company to run a Solarize CT program in Ashford and we were able to add 25 residential solar installations in our town. Our home is among them and we look forward to even more energy savings when the solar photovoltaic panels are installed.

I deeply appreciate these programs, which allowed my family and our town to adopt these energy saving technologies, lower costs and help to grow clean, renewable energy in Connecticut. I feel fortunate that our home was suitable for these technologies.

However, despite the fact that costs have come down and that there are incentives to make renewable energy more affordable, the majority of Connecticut homeowners cannot access this affordable clean energy, because they do not have a suitable site on their own property. In fact, 75% of Connecticut energy customers are unable to benefit from the state's clean energy programs, including renters, condo-owners, and homeowners with tree-shaded or otherwise unsuitable homes.

HB 5412 will enable all energy customers to participate in shared clean energy facilities and receive credit on their utility bill for their portion of the clean energy produced. All customers contribute to these programs, and all should benefit from them, even if they don't own property. It will also boost the Connecticut solar industry, attract new investment from national solar companies, and create thousands of new in-state jobs.

I urge passage of this important bill.

I would also like to support **proposed S.B. No. 134 AN ACT APPROPRIATING FUNDS TO THE CLEAN ENERGY FINANCE AND INVESTMENT AUTHORITY**. This act would restore \$19 million to CEFIA that was raided under last year's state budget. I feel that this would return to CEFIA the full funding it was intended to have to enable it to do its work effectively. I would oppose any efforts to raid CEFIA funds in the future.

S.B. No. 358 AN ACT CONCERNING THE COMMERCIAL PROPERTY ASSESSED CLEAN ENERGY PROGRAM allows C-PACE to finance connection to microgrids that use clean energy. I urge the Committee to support this bill as well.

Lastly, I urge support of **H.B. No. 5409 AN ACT CONCERNING HYDRAULIC FRACTURING WASTE**. This bill seeks to categorize fracking waste as hazardous and requires further study of the issue and its potential impacts on CT. Studies have found that fracking waste contains many toxic chemicals that are carcinogenic, neurotoxic and disruptive to the endocrine system. They can also be contaminated with high levels of radiation. It seems appropriate to classify such material as hazardous waste, rather than a more benign label such as industrial waste, and I would encourage you to keep it out of our state altogether.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Sincerely,

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